

Serial No.: 09/057,313
Attorney Docket No.: 033449-002
Amendment

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E1

providing a vehicle including a body portion and a gripping portion including a spreader attachment, said gripping portion being capable of being raised and lowered, rotated, and inclined relative to said body portion;

individually lifting and transporting each container by means of said vehicle over a ramp to a storage deck of a marine vessel, said ramp and storage deck having sufficient strength to support said vehicle when said vehicle is transporting a fully loaded one of said containers;

positioning each container at desired locations on said deck by means of said vehicle for transportation by said marine vessel; and

securing said container to said deck at said locations.

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22. (Three Times Amended) A method of offloading containers from a marine vessel comprising the steps of:

selecting a plurality of containers adapted to contain and protect freight in a marine environment located on a deck of a marine vessel, each container having a set of outer walls defining an inner volume and having freight loaded therein;

providing a vehicle including a body portion and a gripping portion including a spreader attachment, said gripping portion being capable of being raised and lowered, rotated, and inclined relative to said body portion;

individually lifting and transporting each container by means of said vehicle over a ramp from a storage deck of a marine vessel, said ramp and storage deck having sufficient strength to support said vehicle when said vehicle is transporting a fully loaded one of said containers;

placing each container at desired locations on an associated dock by said vehicle.

E3

24. (Three Times Amended) A method of transporting containers by a marine vessel comprising the steps of:

selecting a plurality of containers adapted to contain and protect freight in a marine environment, each container having a set of outer walls defining an inner volume;

loading freight into said inner volume;

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providing a vehicle including a body portion and a gripping portion including a spreader attachment, said gripping portion being capable of being raised and lowered, rotated, and inclined relative to said body portion;

individually lifting and transporting each container by means of said vehicle over a ramp to a storage deck of a marine vessel, said ramp and storage deck having sufficient strength to support said vehicle when said vehicle is transporting a fully loaded one of said containers;

individually positioning each container in vertical stacks at desired locations on said deck by means of said vehicle for transportation by said marine vessel, and securing said containers in vertical stacks to each other by means of semiautomatic twistlocks;

securing each container to said deck at said locations by semiautomatic twistlocks;

towing said marine vessel with each container secured to said deck thereof from a loading site to a destination site; and

offloading each container from said vessel at said destination site by a reach stacker vehicle.

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25. (Four Times Amended) A method of transporting containers with a marine vessel comprising the steps of:

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selecting a plurality of containers adapted to contain and protect freight in a marine environment, each container having a set of outer walls defining an inner volume and having freight loaded therein;

providing a vehicle including a body portion and a gripping portion including a spreader attachment, said gripping portion being capable of being raised and lowered, rotated, and inclined relative to said body portion;

lifting a container by means of said vehicle;

causing said vehicle to travel over a ramp to a storage deck of a marine vessel, said ramp and storage deck having sufficient strength to support said vehicle when said vehicle is transporting a fully loaded one of said containers;

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positioning said container at a desired location on said deck by means of said vehicle; and
repeating said lifting, causing and positioning steps for each of said plurality of containers.

Add the following new claims 36-40:

E4
36. The method of claim 16 wherein ~~said lifting and transporting step includes gripping each container with said gripping portion, and wherein said positioning step includes raising and lowering, rotating, and inclining said gripping portion and said gripped container relative to said body portion.~~

37. The method of claim 16 wherein said vehicle is a reach stacker.

38. The method of claim 16 wherein each container includes a pair of opposed receptacles, and wherein said spreader attachment is received in said receptacles during said lifting and transporting step.

39. The method of claim 16 wherein said lifting and transporting step including gripping each container at or adjacent to a top edge of each container.

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40. The method of claim 16 wherein said marine vessel includes a rail extending along a deck of said ship, and wherein the method further comprising the steps of, before said lifting and transporting step, providing a rail having a downwardly depending lip and coupling said ramp to said marine vessel such that said lip is located adjacent to and inwardly of said rail and such that said ramp extends between said vessel and a loading dock.